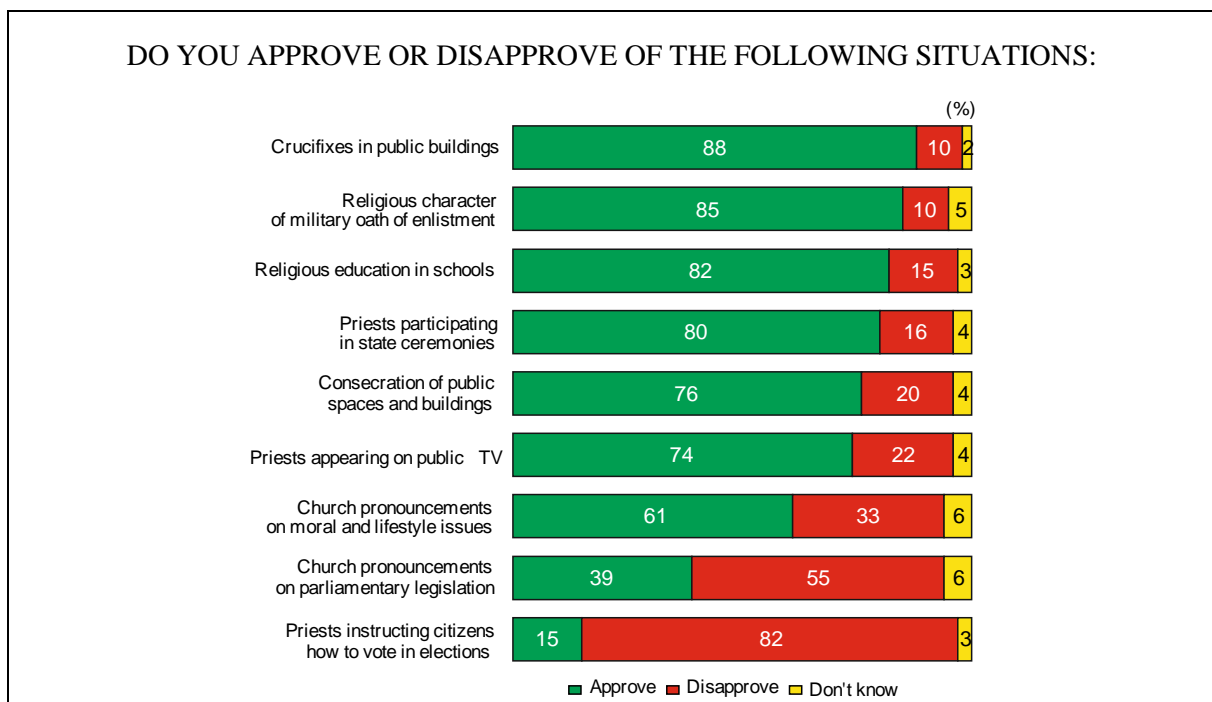


RELIGION AND THE CHURCH IN PUBLIC SPACE

The relations between the Church and the state are a topic of numerous public debates and legal analyses. One could claim that studies of the Church-state relations have become a new discipline of knowledge.

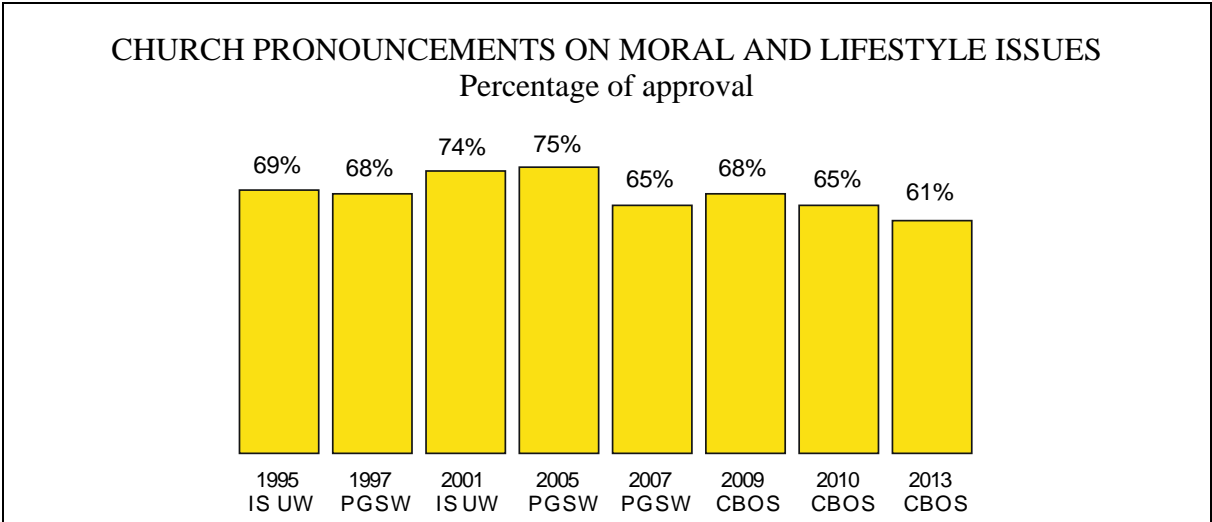
In Poland, the presence of religious symbols, Church and priests in the public sphere is strongly grounded in culture. The vast majority of Poles do not object to crucifixes in public buildings (88%), religious character of military oath (85%), religious education in school (82%), participation of the clergy in state ceremonies (80%), consecration of public space and buildings (76%) or priests on public television (74%). Even people who rarely or never attend religious service rarely or never and respondents with left-wing political views in their majority do not object to the above-mentioned practices.



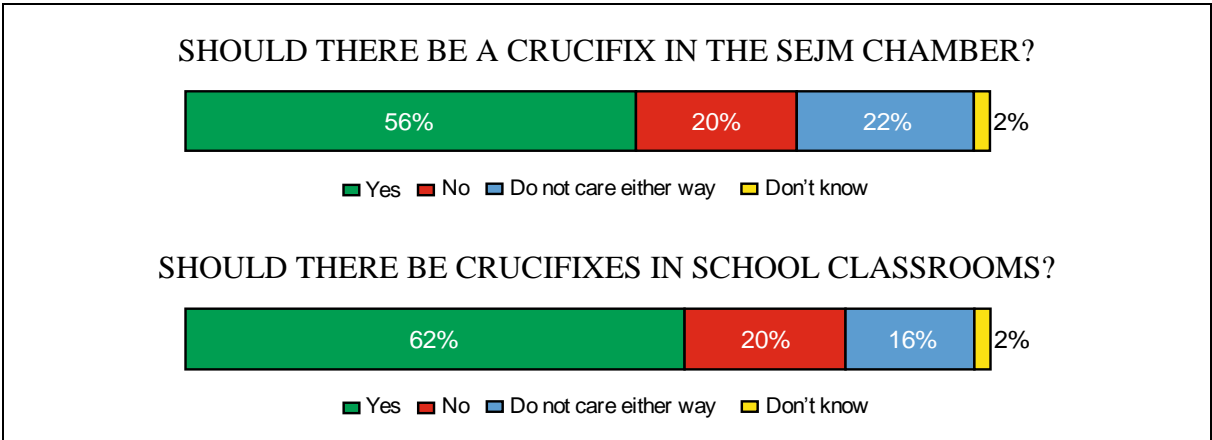
Church pronouncements on moral and lifestyle issues are more controversial; however, approval prevails (61%). Moral teaching of the Church offends the majority of people who do not practice religion (52%), almost half of people who go to church incidentally (46%), as well as a significant proportion of supporters of the political left wing (45%).

The majority of respondents reject Church influence on politics: expressing views on legislation (55%), and, especially, priests giving instructions how to vote (82%). Even the most religious respondents, such as people attending service several times a week (54%) and supporters of political right wing (76%) oppose priests advising citizens on voting behaviour.

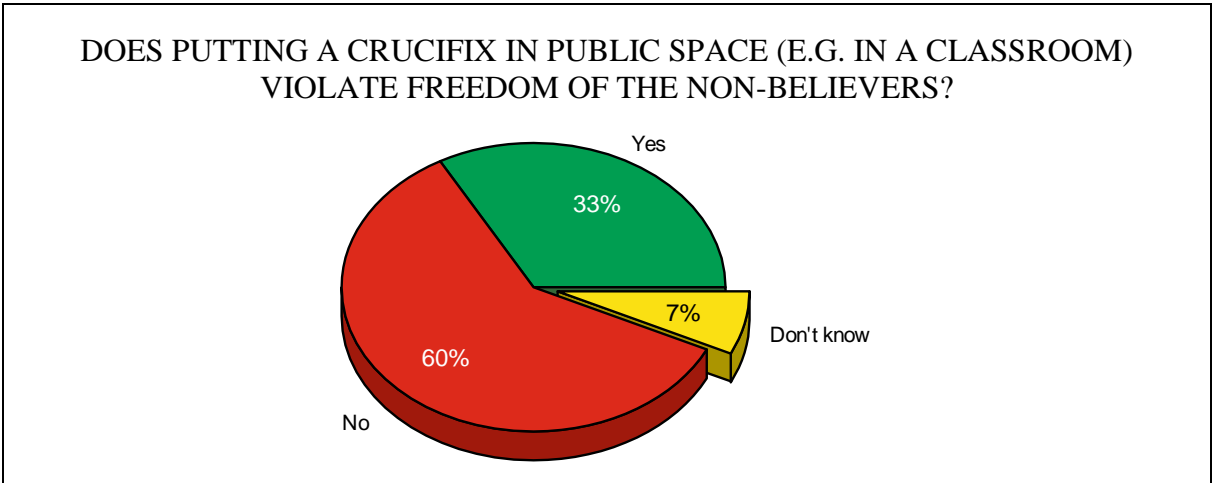
In the last 18 years, the opinions about the public presence of the Church have remained stable, in spite of some context-dependent fluctuation. However, Church pronouncements on moral issues and lifestyle have become increasingly unacceptable for the public opinion.



While nine-tenths approve of a crucifix in public buildings, its presence in Sejm is accepted by 56% of respondents. Its acceptance in schoolrooms is slightly higher, at 62%.



Sometimes the argument is invoked that the crucifix in public space violates the freedom of non-believers. This opinion is rejected by 60% of respondents, while one-third (33%) agree that it may indeed be the case.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: *"Religion and the Church in public space"*, December 2013. Fieldwork for national sample: August 2013, N=904. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.